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ABSTRACT

Using data from the National Center for Education Statistics 1993 survey of colleges and universities, this report reviews the frequency of part-time employment in higher education in the context of concerns about the culture of the institution and important finance issues. Part-time workers receive a lower pay rate than full-time employees, and they are not as closely tied to the campus. The study found that most part-time teachers are treated as if they are temporary, although many of them have worked for the same campus for several years. This report delineates the use of part-time workers by institutional type and job category. Employment is reported for three types of institutions: public community colleges, public four-year colleges and universities, and private colleges and universities. The report groups these employees into seven categories: faculty, executive and administrative, other professionals, technical and paraprofessional, skilled crafts, clerical and secretarial, and service and maintenance. Tables include: (1) summary of employment by job category; (2) full and part-time faculty members by institutional type and control, 1993; (3) percent part-time employees by job category; (4) full and part-time employees by institutional type; (5) community colleges; and (6) public four-year colleges and universities. (JLS)

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Update

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Update

Part-time Employment in Academe

Introduction

This report reviews the incidence of part-time employment in higher education. This topic is important because it raises concerns about the culture of the institution and important finance issues. Part-time workers receive a lower pay rate than full-time employees, and they are not as closely tied to the campus. Most part-time teachers are treated as if they are temporary, although many of them have worked for the same campus for several years (see NEA Higher Education Research Center *Update*, July 1995).

Not surprisingly, faculty members are more likely to be employed part-time than employees in other categories. Over half the college and university teachers are part-time employees. Part-time workers are less likely to perform other functions in higher education institutions.

This report delineates the use of part-time workers by institutional type and job category. Employment is reported for three types of institutions: public community colleges, public four-year colleges and universities, and private colleges and universities. Higher education employees fall into seven job categories:

1. Faculty
2. Executive and Administrative
3. Other Professionals
4. Technical and Paraprofessional
5. Skilled Crafts
6. Clerical and Secretarial
7. Service and Maintenance

The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) *Fall Staff in Postsecondary Institutions*, 1993 is the basis for the report. Colleges and universities reported these data in the fall of 1993. Respondents assign employees to part-time status by their internal reporting rules and not by a standardized categorization system. These data represent the most current and only comprehensive information on the number of employees working in higher education institutions. The results do not include contract employees or college work-study students. Full-time faculty members include the total of those who teach on 9/10 month and 11/12 month contracts. This report includes research and teaching assistants. They are counted as part-time faculty members.

Results

Results are presented in two ways. The first section provides aggregate information about part-time employees by employment category, with special attention paid to faculty. The second set of results compares the use of part-time employees among the three different types of institutions.

A. Overview

Table 1 provides an overview of the number of employees by job category and part or full-time employment status. Colleges and universities employ 2.6 million people from chancellors to janitors. Thirty-one percent of them work part-time, and the remaining 69 percent work full-time. As shown in Table 1, 43 percent of all employees are classified as faculty. The remaining 57 percent of employees work in non-teaching jobs. The categories of employees are listed in descending order by total number employed.

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B. Faculty Members

American higher education institutions employed 1.1 million faculty members in 1993. Not only do faculty members comprise the largest single employment category, but they are the most likely to work part-time (Table 2). Over 565,000 faculty members teach part-time, if 202,000 research and teaching assistants are included. Excluding research and teaching assistants from the count results in 40 percent of all faculty members teaching part-time. After TA/RAs are included the part-time share jumps to 51 percent. Part-time faculty members teach an estimated one-quarter of all college courses offered.[1]

Community colleges are more likely to use part-time faculty members than other types of institutions. Only 35 percent of the community college faculty members teach full-time; the remaining 65 percent teach part-time. These institutions use very few teaching assistants.

Four-year public colleges and universities are less likely to use part-time instructors than community colleges. Including teaching and research assistants results in a big difference in the estimated share of part-time faculty members (TA/RA in Table 2). Excluding TA/RAs results in classifying 24 percent of the faculty members in 4-year public institutions as part-time instructors. Adding TA/RAs doubles the estimate of part-time teachers to nearly half the faculty members in 4-year public institutions.

Private 4-year colleges and universities use TA/RAs more sparingly than public institutions. Excluding the teaching assistants results in 38 percent of the faculty members being classified as part-time, and adding them pushes the share to 44 percent.

1. Teaching and research assistants

Most reports on the use of part-time faculty members do not include TA/RAs. This is a serious oversight because over one-third of the part-time faculty members (35.8 percent) are TA/RAs. Public 4-year colleges and universities use a high proportion of TA/RAs. That sector accounts for 86 percent of the total TA/RAs.

Two arguments are made for not including TA/RAs in the total. First, it is not possible to decide whether an assistant teaches or does research. It may be inappropriate to include all of them in the part-time faculty category. Second, this group represents a different category of employment than other part-time instructors. Teaching for them is part of the preparation for a professional career as well as a source of income.

Table 2 provides information on the number and share of faculty members who teach part and full-time. The calculations are presented with and without TA/RAs for each of the three higher education sectors.

2. Change From 1991

Excluding TA/RAs results in 40 percent of the faculty members being classified as part-time employees. Previous estimates of part-time faculty members have been lower than this. Earlier federal reports have concluded that about one-third of the faculty members are part-time (for examples see *Digest of Education Statistics, 1995*, U.S. Department of Education, OERI, Washington, D.C. October 1995, p. 234). The earlier estimates were probably low. *National Profiles of Community Colleges: Trends and Statis-*

Table 1

SUMMARY OF EMPLOYMENT BY JOB CATEGORY

Job Category	Full-time	Part-time	Total	Percent
Faculty	542,155	565,942	1,108,097	43.1%
Clerical & Secretarial	347,987	84,659	432,646	16.8%
Other Professionals	349,332	68,806	418,138	16.3%
Service & Maintenance	188,468	39,647	228,115	8.9%
Tech/Paraprofessional	142,291	40,584	182,875	7.1%
Executive	133,174	5,895	139,069	5.4%
Skilled Crafts	60,957	3,040	63,997	2.5%
Total	**1,764,364**	**808,573**	**2,572,937**	**100.0%**
Average Percent	**68.6%**	**31.4%**	**100.0%**	**100.0%**

Source: NCES Fall Staff in Postsecondary Institutions, 1993

[1] This estimate is based on a calculated assumption. For example, in a community college, a full-time teacher would teach ten classes a year and the average part-time teacher would teach 2.5 classes annually.

Table 2

FULL AND PART-TIME FACULTY MEMBERS BY INSTITUTIONAL TYPE AND CONTROL, 1993

Institutional Type	Full-time		Part-time		Total
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number (100%)
Community College	96,698	35.2%	177,844	64.8%	274,542
With TA/RA (2,762)	96,698	34.9%	180,606	65.1%	277,304
4-year Public	287,786	76.4%	88,678	23.6%	376,464
With TA/RA (171,666)	287,786	52.5%	260,344	47.5%	548,130
4-year Private	157,671	61.9%	97,014	38.1%	254,685
With TA/RA (27,978)	157,671	55.8%	124,992	44.2%	282,663
All faculty Sub-Total	542,155	59.9%	363,536	40.1%	905,691
Total With TA/RA 1,108,097	**(202,406)**	**542,155**	**48.9%**	**565,942**	**51.1%**

TA/RA = Total of all research and teaching assistants. None are reported for community colleges.

Source: NCES Fall Staff in Postsecondary Institutions, 1993

tics (CC Press, 1995, Washington, D.C.), estimates that about 65 percent of community college faculty members teach part-time and the remaining 35 percent teach full-time. That estimate is consistent with the data used in this report. The evidence suggests that the earlier federal reports were in error.

The correction represents a significantly higher estimate of the number of part-time faculty members than the total reported by the federal government in 1991. Compared to 1991(IPEDS Staff Survey 1991), there has been a modest increase in the number of full-time faculty members and major increases in part-time faculty numbers. In community colleges the number of part-time faculty members went from 126,969 to 177,844, a 40 percent increase. In public four-year colleges and universities, the number of part-time teachers rose from 73,606 to 88,678, a 20 percent increase. There was a 15 percent increase in the use of part-time faculty members in private colleges and universities.

It is difficult to chart a trend with only two points in time The earlier federal reports may have underestimated the number of part-time faculty members. The 1993 data used here are closer to other estimates using other than federal data. The National Study of Postsecondary Faculty: 1993, produced by NCES, also includes the error of under counting part-time faculty members. They are reweighting the numbers to increase the number of part-time faculty members. At this time (January 1997), the newer data are not available.

The American Association of Community Colleges report that the share of part-time faculty members teaching in community colleges increased from 41 percent in 1973 to 65 percent in 1991.[2] Stated in another way, the number of full-time faculty members increased by 14.5 percent between 1973 and 1991. During that same time, the number of part-time faculty members increased by 205.4 percent. This result documents a trend of increasing use of part-time faculty members in community colleges.

C. Other Employees

Part-time employees in the other six job categories represent a smaller share than found for the faculty. The percent of part-time employees ranges from 22 percent to 4 percent in the remaining six employment categories. This is the opposite of the way most organizations use part-time workers. Generally, part-time employees fill the least demanding slots, not those that require the most training and experience.

Table 3 lists the percent of workers in each employment category who are employed part-time. Technical and paraprofessional employees rank as the second most likely group to work part-time. Twenty-two

[2] *National Profile of Community Colleges: Trends and Statistics*, 1995-96 ed. Kent Phillippe, 1995, American Association of Community Colleges, Washington, D.C.

percent of the technical and paraprofessional employees and almost 20 percent of clerical/secretarial employees work part-time. Executives and skilled craft employees make up the bottom of the distribution. Less than 5 percent of the individuals in these two categories are part-time employees. Taken together, 16.6 percent of all the non-faculty employees in higher education work part-time, compared to 51 percent of those who teach.

D. Institutional Type

The next series of tables provides information that compares the use of part-time employees in each of the job categories and by type of institution. The data suggest that community colleges have a greater share of part-time employees in all types of jobs compared to either 4-year public or private institutions. Community colleges' share of part-time employees (29.0 percent) is more than twice their share of full-time employees (13.5 percent) (Table 4).

1. Community colleges

Table 5 provides more detail about community colleges' use of part-time employees. Sixty-five percent of the teachers are classified as part-time. This is a larger share than suggested in previous reports that used federal data. Half the employees in community colleges work part-time. High proportions of technical and paraprofessionals (39 percent) work part-time, as do secretaries and clerks (34 percent).

The intense use of part-time employees by community colleges reflects the enrollment patterns typical of this sector. Nearly two-thirds of the students attending community colleges do so part-time. The off-hour enrollment means that evening and weekend operations must be supported not only by faculty members, but by all types of employees.

The employees who are least likely to work part-time are those classified as executive and administrative personnel. Only 6.5 percent of them are employed part-time. Faculty members are nine times as likely to work part-time as administrators.

2. Public four-year colleges and universities

Public colleges and universities account for 54 percent of all the employees in higher education. (See Table 6.) The sector's dominance reflects the fact that these institutions enroll 46 percent of the students in higher education. Some employees

Table 3

PERCENT PART-TIME EMPLOYEES BY JOB CATEGORY

Job Category	Full-time Number	Full-time Percent	Part-time Number	Part-time Percent	Total (100%)
Faculty (includes TA/RA)	542,155	48.9%	565,942	51.1%	**1,108,097**
Clerical & Secretarial	347,987	80.4%	84,659	19.6%	**432,646**
Other Professionals	349,332	83.5%	68,806	16.5%	**418,138**
Service & Maintenance	188,468	82.6%	39,647	17.4%	**228,115**
Tech/Para-professional	142,291	77.8%	40,584	22.2%	**182,875**
Executive	133,174	95.8%	5,895	4.2%	**139,069**
Skilled Crafts	60,957	95.3%	3,040	4.8%	**63,997**
Average	**1,764,364**	**68.6%**	**808,573**	**31.4%**	**2,572,937**

Each row sums to 100%

Source: NCES Fall Staff in Postsecondary Institutions, 1993

Table 4

FULL AND PART-TIME EMPLOYEES BY INSTITUTIONAL TYPE

	Full-time	Percent	Part-time	Percent
Community College	237,518	13.5	234,674	29.0
4-year Public	965,142	54.7	369,325	45.7
Private	561,704	31.8	204,547	25.3
Total	1,764,364	100.0	808,546	100.0
Total	**1,764,364**	**808,573**	**2,572,937**	**100.0%**

Source: NCES Fall Staff in Postsecondary Institutions, 1993

Table 5

COMMUNITY COLLEGES

Employment Group	Full-time Number	Full-time Percent	Part-time Number	Part-time Percent	Total (100%)
Faculty	96,698	34.9%	180,606	65.1%	**277,304**
Executive, Administrative	19,633	93.5%	1,369	6.5%	**21,002**
Other Professional	27,699	77.9%	7,877	22.1%	**35,576**
Tech/Para-professional	19,048	61.1%	12,110	38.9%	**31,158**
Clerical & Secretarial	46,597	65.8%	24,209	34.2%	**70,806**
Skilled Crafts	5,428	88.2%	724	11.8%	**6,152**
Service & Maintenance	22,415	74.2%	7,779	25.8%	**30,194**
Total	**237,518**	**50.3%**	**234,674**	**49.7%**	**472,192**

Each row sums to 100%

Source: NCES Fall Staff in Postsecondary Institutions, 1993

Table 6

PUBLIC FOUR-YEAR COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES

Employment Group	Full-time Number	Full-time Percent	Part-time Number	Part-time Percent	Total (100%)
Faculty	287,786	52.5%	260,344	47.5%	**548,130**
Executive, Managerial	56,570	96.9%	1,822	3.1%	**58,392**
Other Professional	210,047	84.4%	38,930	15.6%	**248,977**
Tech/Para-professional	80,413	80.4%	19,646	19.6%	**100,059**
Clerical & Secretarial	185,702	85.4%	31,749	14.6%	**217,451**
Skilled Crafts	39,083	96.5%	1,408	3.5%	**40,491**
Service & Maintenance	105,541	87.2%	15,426	12.8%	**120,967**
Total	**965,142**	**72.3%**	**369,325**	**27.7%**	**1,334,467**

Each row sums to 100%

Source: NCES Fall Staff in Postsecondary Institutions, 1993

may work in educational operations associated with the university, such as research institutes or teaching hospitals. Only employees associated with the educational function of these operations are counted.

The number of teaching and research assistants used in these institutions is an important part of their professional teaching and research staff. Including teaching assistants results in 49.5 percent of the faculty members working part-time, and 42 percent if they are excluded. There are 202,406 TA/RAs in all of higher education. Eighty-five percent (177,666) work in public four-year colleges and universities. RAs and TAs represent 31 percent of the working faculty in public colleges and universities. They account for two-thirds of the part-time faculty members.

3. Private institutions

Private colleges and universities include a diverse set of institutions ranging from small two-year colleges to world class universities. Operationally, there is no difference in the use of part-time employees between public colleges and universities and private institutions. There is only a 1 percentage point difference between the two (28 percent part-time for public and 27 percent for private institutions). There are differences evident in the use of part-time employees among the other employment categories. Specifically, private institutions seem much more likely to hire service and maintenance employees part-time than public institutions.

Conclusions

Part-time employees comprise a significant part of the working staff in higher education. Community colleges use more part-time employees than other sectors of higher education. Even administrators are more likely to work part-time in

community colleges than other types of institutions. This sector runs the risk of being dominated by part-time teachers who may not be able to participate in the full-range of institutional activities.

Teaching assistants represent an important part of the teaching popl, especially in public colleges and universities. They teach to gain professional experience and make money while they are in graduate school. Trying to decide if institutions make too much use of graduate assistants requires a review at the local level. These national data can only identify the number employed. More research needs to be done to determine what these employees do and how they are paid.

Earlier estimates of the number of part-time employees have been consistently low. Given the inconsistency in data from the federal government, it is not possible to judge whether more part-time instructors are being hired over time. Using the two points in time that are available, 1991 and 1993, does not provide enough information to judge long-term trends. It will take more time to confirm whether the informal estimates that colleges are hiring more part-time employees are true.

This data base does not help decide the degree to which colleges and universities are increasing their use of contract employees. If the NCES data are reliable, it appears as if there has been a decline in every full-time employment category except faculty. This has taken place during a time when there was essentially no change in enrollment.

It's hard to think of any other industry that uses so many part-time professionals as a regular part of their staff. The extensive use of part-time instructors raises concerns about exploitation because of their lower pay and exclusion from any hope of receiving tenure. Often they teach classes at undesirable hours. Sometimes they may teach the less advanced classes and remedial courses.

There are pluses to using part-time faculty members. Many part-time teachers provide diverse and specialized skills to complement the courses offered by full-time faculty members. Older faculty members may use part-time teaching as a way to stay engaged with the institution after they retire. Part-time faculty may make it possible to offer classes at satellite campuses or in other community centers far from the main campus.

The limited information about part-time faculty members constrains the conclusions that can be reached. There have been no national studies to help understand the role research and teaching assistants play in higher education. This study suggests that they are a massive teaching presence in public colleges and universities. If the educational experience of so many undergraduates is in the hands of graduate teaching assistants, we need to know more about what and how they manage this responsibility.

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